

Conducting COVID-19 Case Investigations at a Local Health Department

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Cleveland Department of Public Health

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- The Cleveland Department of Public Health (CDPH) is the local health organization for the city of Cleveland
- CDPH aims to improve the quality of life in Cleveland by preventing disease, promoting healthy behaviors, and protecting the environment
- CDPH provides clinical, environmental, health promotion and population-based services to the community
- CDPH partners with various organizations and institutions including Case Western Reserve University, Metro Health Medical Center, Cuyahoga County Board of Health, among others

Population

CDPH caters to, and conducts COVID-19 case investigations for the residents of the city of Cleveland

Case Investigation

- Is conducted by a local or state health department
- Involves a one-time interview/conversation with confirmed positive COVID-19 cases who have a positive test result
- Typically takes place within 24 hours of a positive COVID-19 test result being entered into a healthcare database

Learning Objectives

- Understand the difference between conducting case investigations and contact tracing
- Describe the “basics” or “fundamentals” of COVID-19 to interviewees as needed during case investigations
- Demonstrate an ability to perform effectively and professionally when communicating with CDPH staff and during case investigation interviews
- Apply tactful communication and negotiation skills to address any concerns or challenges that arise when in contact with COVID-19 case interviewees

Activities

- Conduct phone call interviews with city of Cleveland residents who have tested positive for COVID-19
- Record and document data from phone call interviews with COVID-19 positive residents/interviewees
- Send e-mails to interviewees including COVID-19 isolation instructions and resources
- Answer COVID-19 related questions that arise from interviewees
 - DO NOT GIVE MEDICAL ADVICE

Contact Tracing

- Is conducted by various partner organizations engaged with local or state health departments
- Involves interviews with close contacts of cases who are identified during the case investigation process
- Typically begins within 24 hours of identification of contacts
 - Contacts are followed up with over a period of 14 days (beginning from the time of exposure)

Deliverables

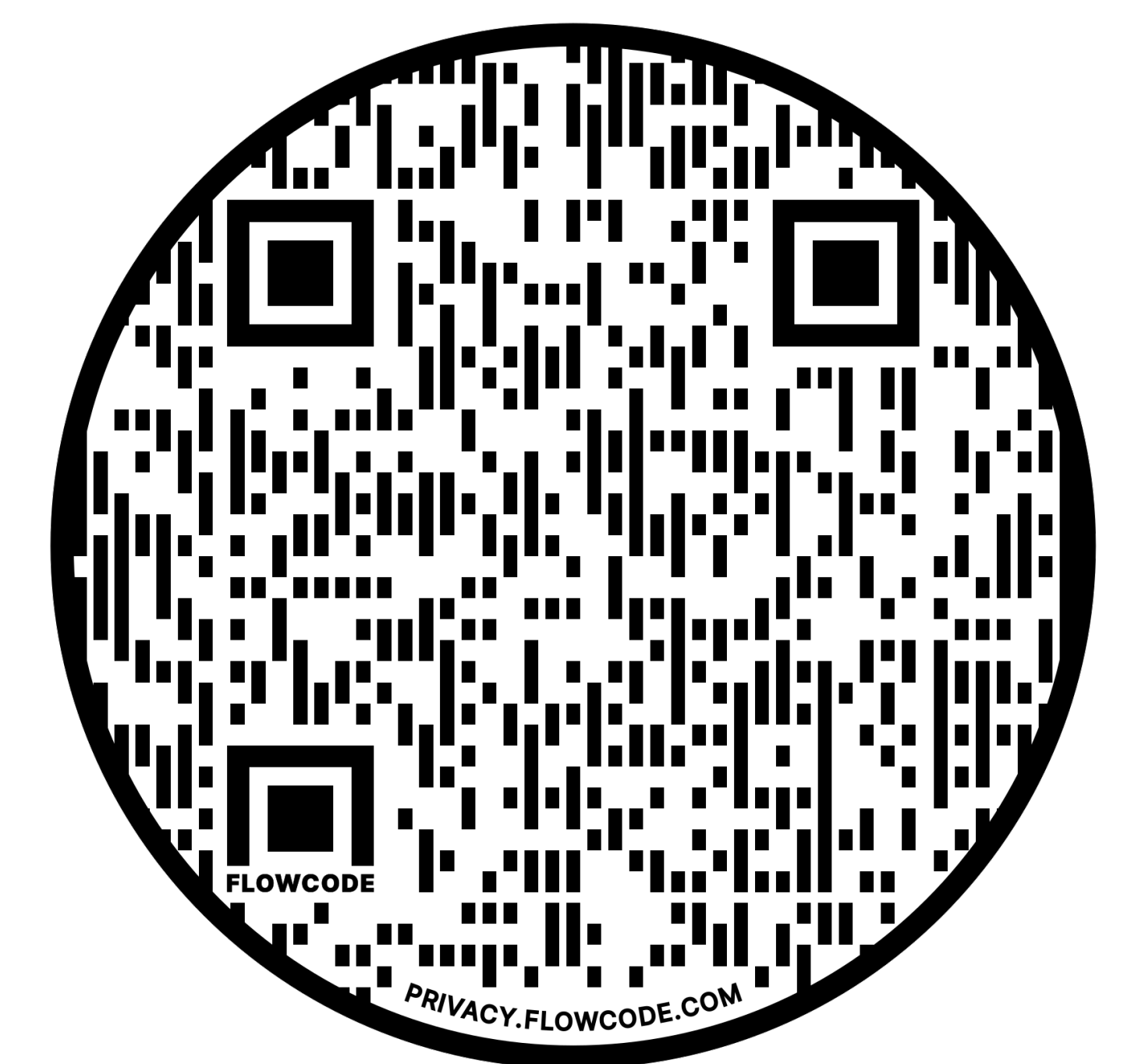
- Do-It-Yourself (DIY) mask making guide
- COVID-19 case investigation training manual
- Informational brochure containing frequently asked questions (FAQs) that may arise during interviews, and their appropriate responses or actions

Public Health Implications

- Health departments are responsible for conducting COVID-19 case investigations
- Data collected from case investigations enables health departments to identify “hotspots” and/or potential outbreaks
- Case investigation data have epidemiological value, and can be used in public health research
- Case investigation data shows trends in the progression of COVID-19 and keeps the public informed

Lessons Learned

- Establishing trust and rapport between a case investigator and a COVID-19 positive patient is necessary and important to obtain information and ensure cooperation throughout the investigation.
- Good interview skills can be taught/learned, and will improve with practice



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